NAXOS
A Guided Tour of
Nationalism in the
Romantic Era
Volume 6

TCHAIKOVSKY, PYOTR ILYICH (1840–1893)

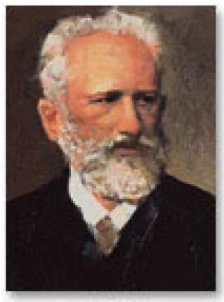
1 Eugene Onegin, Op. 24, Act II Scene 1: Waltz
2 Pique Dame (The Queen of Spades), Op. 68, Act 1: Overture
3 The Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71a, I. Miniature Overture
4 Swan Lake, Op. 20, Introduction
5 The Sleeping Beauty, Op. 66, Introduction
6 Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36,
I. Andante sostenuto – Moderato con anima
7 Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64, I. Andante – Allegro con anima
8 Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74, 'Pathetique',
I. Adagio – Allegro non troppo
9 Capriccio Italien, Op. 45, N/A
10 1812 Overture, Op. 49,
11 Serenade for Strings in C major, Op. 48, I. Pezzo in forma di Sonatina
12 Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35, I. Allegro moderato
13 Sérénade mélancolique (Melancholy Serenade), Op. 26, N/A
14 Variations on a Rococo Theme in A major, Op. 33, N/A
15 Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23,
I. Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso – Allegro con spirito
16 String Quartet No. 1 in D major, Op. 11, I. Moderato e semplice
17 Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 50, I. Pezzo elegiaco
18 Les Saisons (The Seasons), Op. 37b, I. January: By the Fireside
19 6 Morceaux, Op. 51 (excerpts), No. 1. Valse de salon
20 6 Morceaux, Op. 19, IV. Nocturne in C sharp minor: Andante sentimentale

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, NIKOLAI (1844–1908)

21 Snow Maiden, Cortège
22 Le coq d'or, Roi Dodon dans son palais
23 Tale of Tsar Saltan, Op. 57, Flight of the Bumblebee
24 Skazaniye o nevidimom grade Kitezhe i deve Fevronii
(Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevroniya),
Prelude: In praise of the wilderness
25 Sadko, Introduction
26 Capriccio espagnol, Op. 34, I. Alborada
27 Svetliy prazdnik (Russian Easter Festival), Op. 36, N/A
28 Scheherazade, Op. 35, I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship

RACHMANINOV, SERGEI (1873–1943)

29 Piano Concerto No. 1 in F sharp minor, Op. 1, I. Vivace
30 Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18, I. Moderato
31 Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30, I. Allegro
32 Piano Concerto No. 4 in G minor, Op. 40, II. Largo
33 Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43, N/A
34 Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27, I. Largo: Allegro moderato
35 Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 44, III. Allegro
36 The Rock, Op. 7, N/A
37 Symphonic Dances, Op. 45, I. Non allegro
38 The Isle of the Dead, Op. 29, N/A
39 14 Songs, Op. 34: No. 14. Vocalise (arr. for orchestra), N/A
40 10 Preludes, Op. 23, No. 2 in B flat major: Maestoso
41 13 Preludes, Op. 32, No. 10 in B minor: Lento
42 Études-Tableaux, Op. 33, No. 1 in F minor: Allegro non troppo
43 Études-Tableaux, Op. 39, No. 2 in A minor: Lento assai
44 Piano Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 36,
II. Non allegro - Lento – L'istesso tempo –
45 Morceaux de Fantaisie, Op. 3, I. Elégie
46 Suite No. 2, Op. 17 for two pianos, I. Introduction: Alla marcia
47 Suite No. 1, Op. 5, 'Fantaisie-tableaux', I. Barcarolle: Allegretto
48 Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano, Op. 19, I. Lento – Allegro moderato
49 Aleko , Introduction



TCHAIKOVSKY, PYOTR ILYICH (1840–1893)

Tchaikovsky belonged to the first generation of Russian composers to have the advantage of professional musical training at the Conservatory in St. Petersburg, newly established by Anton Rubinstein (1829–1894). He completed his studies there to become a member of the teaching staff at a similar institution established in Moscow by Nikolay Rubinstein (1835–1881). He left teaching when a rich widow, Nadezhda von Meck, offered him financial support, which continued for much of his life, although they never met. A man of neurotic diffidence, his self-doubt increased by his homosexuality, it has been suggested by some that an impending scandal caused him to take his own life at a time when he was at the height of his powers. Others have found this improbable. Whatever the truth of this, the official cause of death, announced as cholera, enabled his passing to be mourned as it should have been, his achievement in Russian music having become increasingly apparent at home and abroad. His music is thoroughly Russian in character, but, although he was influenced by Balakirev and the ideals of the Russian nationalist composers, 'The Five', he may be seen as belonging to the more international school of composition fostered by the Conservatories that Balakirev so much deplored.

OPERA (Tracks 1-2)
Two above all of Tchaikovsky's 10 operas have retained a place in international repertoire. *Eugene Onegin*, based on a work by Pushkin, was written in 1877, the year of the composer's disastrous and brief attempt at marriage. He returned to Pushkin in 1890 with his powerful opera *The Queen of Spades*.

BALLET (Tracks 3-5)
Tchaikovsky, a master of the miniature forms necessary for ballet, succeeded in raising the quality of the music provided for this changing art form. The first of Tchaikovsky's three full-length ballet scores was *Swan Lake*, completed in 1876, followed in 1889 by *The Sleeping Beauty*. His last ballet, based on a story by E.T.A. Hoffmann, was *The Nutcracker*, first staged in St Petersburg in December 1892.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC (Tracks 6-11)
Tchaikovsky wrote six symphonies. All are well-known, and have retained a place in the contemporary concert repertory. He also composed a number of fantasy overtures, among other works. The *Romeo and Juliet* overture has become especially popular, and the *1812* overture is also famous. Other, smaller-scale orchestral compositions include the Serenade for strings, the popular *Italian Capriccio*, and, rather less well known, four orchestral suites.

CONCERTOS (Tracks 12-15)
The first of Tchaikovsky's three piano concertos has become the most generally popular of all Romantic piano concertos. Tchaikovsky's single Violin Concerto, initially considered to be too difficult, later found a firm place in repertoire. For solo cello Tchaikovsky wrote the V*ariations on a Rococo Theme* and the *Pezzo capriccioso*, as well as shorter pieces for violin and orchestra.

CHAMBER MUSIC (Tracks 16-17)
Tchaikovsky's chamber music includes three string quartets. The slow movement of the first of these has proved very popular both in its original form and in an arrangement by the composer for cello and string orchestra. The *Andante funèbre* of the third quartet also exists in an arrangement by the composer for violin and piano.

PIANO MUSIC (Tracks 18-20)
Tchaikovsky provided a quantity of music for the piano, particularly in the form of shorter pieces suited to the lucrative amateur market. Collections published by the composer include *The Season*s, a set of 12 pieces (one for each month), and several sets of pieces with varying degrees of difficulty.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, NIKOLAI (1844–1908)

One of 'The Five', the leading group of nineteenth-century Russian nationalist composers, Rimsky-Korsakov embarked originally on a career in the navy, following family tradition, and only later resigning to devote himself entirely to music. In 1861, the year before he completed his course at the Naval College, Rimsky-Korsakov met Balakirev, a musician who was to become an important influence on him. In 1871 he became professor of instrumentation and composition at St. Petersburg Conservatory. Rimsky-Korsakov's subsequent career was a distinguished one. He was respected as a teacher, his pupils including the young Stravinsky. He was proficient as an orchestrator and set himself to smoothing out some of the apparent crudities in the work of some of his fellow composers, completing and revising works such as Borodin's opera *Prince Igor* and much of the seemingly uneven writing of Mussorgsky. He was involved in the troubles of 1905, when he sided with the Conservatory students, joining with some colleagues in a public demand for political reform that led to his dismissal. He was able to return to the Conservatory when his pupil and friend Glazunov became director. He died in 1908.

OPERA (Tracks 21-25)
Of the 15 operas completed by Rimsky-Korsakov, mention may be made of *The Snow Maiden, The Maid of Pskov, The Tale of Tsar Saltan, Mlada, Sadko, The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* and the satirical and once banned *Le Coq d'or* ('The Golden Cockerel'). Orchestral and instrumental excerpts from some of these may be very familiar, including the famous 'Flight of the Bumble Bee' from *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC (Track 26-28)
Of the various orchestral works of Rimsky-Korsakov, *Capriccio espagnol* ('Spanish Caprice') and *Sheherazade* are by far the best known, followed by the *Russian Easter Festival* overture. Rimsky-Korsakov's music is always characterised by imaginative and exquisite instrumentation, but especially so in these works.

RACHMANINOV, SERGEI (1873–1943)

Rachmaninov was born at Semyonovo in 1873. After study at the St Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories, he embarked on a career in Russia as a composer, pianist and conductor. His early career brought initial success as a composer, halted by the failure of his first symphony at its first performance in 1897, when it was conducted badly by Glazunov and reviewed in the cruellest terms. He was only able to return to composition after a course of treatment with Dr Nikolay Dahl, a believer in the efficacy of hypnotism. The immediate result was the second of his four piano concertos, a work that has proved to be one of the most immediately popular of all he wrote. The years before the Russian revolution brought continued successful activity as a composer and as a conductor and a career that was bringing him increasing international fame. Exile from his own country after the Revolution forced an increased concentration on performance. He was one of the most distinguished pianists of the day, and though his career enabled him to support his family, it left less time for his work as a composer. He eventually based himself in the United States, and died in Beverly Hills in 1943.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC AND CONCERTOS (Tracks 29-39)
The second of Rachmaninov's four piano concertos holds an unchallenged position among Romantic works in this form. While the *Symphonic Dances* of 1940 enjoy some popularity, as well as the symphonic poem *The Rock* and the dark-hued *Isle of the Dead*, the second of his three numbered symphonies is still more familiar.

PIANO MUSIC (Tracks 40-47)
Rachmaninov's Prelude in C sharp minor won early popularity and has remained one of his best-known pieces. Other piano works include the *Études-tableaux* of 1911 and 1916–17, two sonatas, sets of preludes and *moments musicaux*, transcriptions and the impressive *Variations on a Theme of Corelli* (his last original composition for solo piano, composed in 1931).

OTHER SELECTED WORKS (Tracks 48-49)